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Western Australia.*

## **SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM COMMUNIQUE**

**22 March 2023 – Quarterly Meeting**

The Honourable Sabine Winton, Minister for Early Childhood Education; Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services attended the meeting to thank and address members as the new Minister leading the work of the Supporting Communities Forum (Forum).

The Minister thanked members for their important contribution and participation as valued Forum members, and for being flexible and adaptable in advising and delivering on Government priorities and reform.

The Minister acknowledged the significant pieces of work progressed by the Forum and the important role of the community services sector as a key Government partner.

The Forum welcomed Ms Esme Bowen, Chair of the [Carers Advisory Council](#) for an update on the important role of carers (including unpaid carers) as key partners in the delivery of high-quality care. Members noted the [Western Australian Carers Recognition Act 2004](#) as the key legislation which recognises the role of carers in the community. It includes the [Carers Charter](#), which outlines how carers are to be treated and how they are to be involved in delivering services that affect them and their caring role. Ms Bowen led an impactful discussion on both the challenges and positive initiatives that can better support carers throughout Western Australia. Members discussed examples of best practice in their organisations and were particularly encouraged to identify staff that take on a carer's role beyond their regular jobs, and to consider supporting such staff in accordance with the object of the *Carers Recognition Act 2004* and the Carers Charter.

Members noted the update from Lisa Rodgers, Director General, Department of Education on the progress of the Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce. The Forum agreed to a one-hour special meeting to be scheduled early May at Communicare for a detailed update and deep-dive discussion on the topic.

Members also discussed the State Commissioning Strategy (Strategy). The Agency Commissioning Plan (ACP) Framework developed by the Department of Finance has been released. It will guide government agencies in developing their ACPs, and provide a mechanism to clearly communicate with the community services sector and government how line agencies are driving change at a departmental, program and individual service level, with a five-year commissioning schedule to be included. Members noted that ACPs are to be published biennially by commissioning agencies and will outline and act as a key tool to communicate about an agencies upcoming commissioning work. The Department of Finance are investigating options for community service organisations to access online commissioning training modules being developed for the public sector. Members acknowledged the importance of embedding the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy Working Group as part of the governance structure for implementation of the Strategy.

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Office of Digital Government team provided an update on a whole-of-government data linkage asset that integrates data from across government, and is an opportunity to also integrate community sector organisation data to

help evaluate the impact of commissioned services on outcomes, improve service delivery, and take a person-centred view. Members noted the intent of the data asset and linkage system, and the State Commissioning Strategy as a potential mechanism to enable consistent data collection and integration. More about the data asset system will be publicly available in August 2023.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Working Group provided an update on the important work progressed by members of the working group to build capacity and capability to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles). Members noted the examples shared of organisations implementing the National Principles including SportWest, Shooting Stars, and Uniting WA. The Working Group also agreed to bring together a range of organisations engaged in child-related work for a workshop in this year's Children's Week in October, to showcase examples of implementation of the National Principles and to further support organisations to create child safe environments.

Members noted and discussed key developments on the Child Safe Organisations Campaign organised by the Department of Communities, with support and input from the Working Group, that builds on the campaign launched during Children's Week last year. Over 2023 and 2024, the campaign will target organisations, children, young people, families and carers. Additionally, the Child Safe Knowledge Hub will provide a central location and be accessible to organisations engaged in child-related work across all sectors in WA and who will be required through legislation to implement the National Principles. The hub will include up-to-date information and resources.

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for 17 May 2023.

Meeting notes once endorsed by the Forum, and Communiques from each of the Forum meetings are available on the [Forum's webpage](#).

Thank you for your interest in the Forum.

Please feel free to distribute this Communique to your wider network, and if you would like to register to the Forum's mailing list or have general enquiries on the work of the Forum, please email the Forum Secretariat at [SCF@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:SCF@dpc.wa.gov.au).